Youth Action Council on Transition (YouthACT)

The **Youth Action Council on Transition (YouthACT)** is a national initiative to get more youth with disabilities and their allies involved as leaders who partner with adults and organizations to improve opportunities for youth to succeed in life. “Transition” is the process and period of change that youth go through to become adults. Transition typically occurs between ages 12 and 25. During transition, youth need a variety of opportunities and supports to learn and develop skills and experience, set and achieve goals, and make personal decisions about school, work, and life.

Many organizations and government agencies are responsible for helping youth transition to adulthood. These include schools, employment and training programs, afterschool and recreation programs, health and mental health services, housing programs, disability services, courts and juvenile justice agencies, and child welfare and foster care programs. Too often, youth do not have a voice when agencies and organizations are deciding what youth services and opportunities to offer. It is important for agencies and organizations to hear from youth about what they need and want during the transition years so they can provide the right opportunities, services, and supports. For this reason, YouthACT aims to increase positive youth-adult partnerships where young people and adults work together, share power, and support and learn from each other to build stronger communities. All individuals in the partnership have the opportunity to engage in planning, decision-making, and action consistent with their own interests and skills.

YouthACT works with youth to develop skills and knowledge in leadership and advocacy so they can speak up about what all youth need to be successful during transition to adulthood. YouthACT also supports youth in learning how to partner with adults and work with peers as a team to advocate for improving youth opportunities and services in their local communities. YouthACT teams consist of two youth, an adult partner, and a supporting organization, which must have a designated supporting organization contact. At least one of the youth must have a disability or chronic health condition to ensure that youth with disabilities are included as leaders along with their allies. Adult partners work in partnership and share equal responsibility and decision-making with the two youth team members. The organization contact is committed to supporting the YouthACT team and increasing youth voice and leadership within the supporting organization, as well as providing resources, like meeting space, to the team.

YouthACT has had three cohorts of teams chosen through a competitive application process that each served two-year terms. Cohort 1 served in 2013-2015, Cohort 2 served in 2014-2016, and Cohort 3 served in 2015-2017. NCWD/Youth is continuing to partner with YouthACT alumni in various ways.

Read YouthACT’s  [Team Profiles](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/news_post/youthact-team-profiles-highlight-youth-leadership-advocacy/) and watch the [YouthACT Overview Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJUUe9vGoxU).

YouthACT produced the “Hitting the Open Road” video series for youth. These short videos are based on the publication, written for youth, by youth on exploring options as youth prepare to transition out of high school. Each video features a young person narrating their road to transition, with advice on how others can build their own pathway to success. Video topics include:

* [Options While in High School](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cen6Th8ugm8&feature=youtu.be)
* [Volunteering into the Workforce](https://youtu.be/sKJwX9TW_zQ)
* [Making Choices about College](https://youtu.be/UIwFsBAEx6k)

YouthACT has produced two videos around the importance of youth and adult partnerships. In these short videos, young leaders share insights on what it means to be a leader, and how youth and adult partners can work together collaboratively as equal partners. These videos include:

* [You Can Lead Too!: Youth Perspectives on Leadership](https://youtu.be/3Xuq-q1jMxA)
* [Developing Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships](https://youtu.be/o4MmE0cB14g)

Publications and developed in collaboration with YouthACT teams:

* [Guiding Your Success Tool](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/guiding-your-success-tool/)
* [Hitting the Open Road After High School: Hot to Choose Your Own Adventure to Success!](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/hitting-the-open-road-after-high-school-how-to-choose-your-own-adventure-to-success/)
* [By Youth, For Youth: Employment](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/by-youth-for-youth-employment/)
* [A Young Person’s Guide to Healthcare Transition](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/a-young-persons-guide-to-health-care-transition/)
* [YouthACT Policy Brief – Our Voices Matter in Our Communities](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/youthact-policy-brief-our-voices-matter-in-communities/)
* [YouthACT Policy Brief – Our Lives in High School and Beyond](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/youthact-policy-brief-our-lives-in-high-school-and-beyond/)

[Transition Truths Overview](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/transition-truths-an-overview-of-transition-systems/): This tool describes the systems that may affect youth with and without disabilities as they transition from youth to adulthood.

[Transition Truths Online Dialogue Report](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/YouthACT_Dialogue_Report_Final.pdf): This virtual event was held from Thursday, May 19, 2016 through Sunday, May 22, 2016. The online dialogue invited youth with disabilities and allies of the disability community to contribute to a virtual conversation in an effort to gather insight and ideas on strategies and supports that can help youth and young adults with disabilities and their peers become successful adults.

YouthACT Teams by State

* + • YouthACT Thundercats from Twin Cities Metro Area, MN  
    • YouthACT Guiding Lights from Indiana  
    • YouthACT YO! Up & Down from California  
    • YouthACT SoCal P.O.S.S.E. from San Bernardino, CA  
    • YouthACT Masterminds from Denver, CO  
    • YouthACT Seize Control from Philadelphia, PA  
    • YouthACT Youth M.O.V.E. MN from Twin Cities Metro Area, MN

[Find more NCWD/Youth Publications and Resources](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications-resources/)